Wichita Eagle

OF THE WAYS AND MEANS

GOSSIP REGARDING ONE OF UNCLE SAM'S MAIN COMMITTEES.

It Is a Court Which Sits in Judgment on the Commerce, the Manufactures and the Labor of the People—Its Power and Its Personnel.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, April 10.—The ways and means committee of the house has just finished its task of preparing a new tariff bill. What is this ways and means com-

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE ROOMS.

mittee, and how does it work? It is the most powerful committee of congress. It is a court which sits in judgment on the commerce, the manufactures, the labor of the people.

No other thirteen men in the land have so much responsibility, so much power, as have they. All the governors of states, all the cabinet ministers, all the justices of the supreme court, are as pigmies compared to them. As parties go and legislation is carried on, a ways and means committee of the house of representatives possesses authority that is almost monarchical, for it prepares the laws in which is exercised that greatest function of government, the taxing power, and the political party which has made the committee generally enacts the measures which it prepares and proposes.

The ways and means committee is the federal taxing board. It not only determines how much money shall flow into the coffers of the government, but whence it shall come. The taxing board of a county or city as a rule has power only to fix the sum to be collected and to pro rate that among all property owners, so much tax to each hundred dollars of assessed value. No such restrictions bind the autocrats of the ways and means committee. It is within their province to let one man go scot free of taxes and to tax another to death; to say to one manufacturer, "You shall prosper and wax rich," and to his neighbor, "You shall be ruined;" to extinguish or kindle furnace fires; to open or close the doors of factories, and to stop or start the great engines in mills and mines. This

THE INNER SANCTUM.

is a tyrant's power, but it is precisely the power wielded by the thirteen men on whom we are to look.

The ways and means committee, of course, represents in a majority of its members the party in power in the house of representatives. It is appointed by the speaker, and in this creation of committees lies that power of the speaker's office which makes it easily the second office of importance in the United States government. The chairman of the ways and means committee is by tradition and common consent the leader of the house. He is usually a man of long experience and great ability. Tradition says, also, that eight of the members shall be in accord with the majority of the house, while five shall be appointed to represent the minority.

The chief duty of the committee is preparation of a taxing or tariff bill. As a preliminary to this a programme of "hearings" is arranged. On appointed days the representatives of various manufacturing, commercial and agricultural interests are invited to be present and offer arguments concerning the changes in the law which they desire. These interests are never backward. They come to the front always in large numbers. They come from all parts of the country and from every walk of life. Here millionaire manufacturers like Carnegie and Spreckels meet plain, blunt farmers like Mr. Brown, of York county, Pa., and Mr. Piollet, of Bradford county. Sometimes great lawyers appear before the committee to make arguments for their clients, and members of the house, and senators also, for their constituents.

These tariff hearings are held before the full committee, Democrats as well as Republicans. The doors are open, too, and whosoever will may come. Often large crowds assemble, and help to make up a scene of rare interest. In the middle of a room about thirty-five feet square is a long, wide table. It is covered with books, papers and documents. Surrounding it are thirteen chairs, and the table just in front of each chair bears the name of one of the members. Here sits the committee, and crowding about are hundreds of spectators, only a few of whom can find seats.

The house rules against smoking do not obtain here, and every other man has a cigar in his mouth. Of course the air is very bad, and about once in ten minutes an old man who stands in the rear of the room with a long pole in his hand reaches up and pulls down a window. Seven or eight minutes later, when the men with bald heads begin to complain, the old man pushes the window up again. Thus, while we are learning something about the taxing power of our government, we also gain an insight to the crude methods of ventilation practiced in the government's greatest building, into which a score of millions of the tax money have been poured.

The men who come to present arguments before the committee bring with them great numbers of samples. Soon the big table is covered with pieces of cloth, bunches of wool, fragments of metal, glass and earthenware, sugar and sirups in little bottles, and many scores of such things. Clerk Carson is rapidly building up a ways and means museum, composed entirely of these sample articles, and ranging in variety from a pin from Sheffield to the hide of a South American steer.

After the hearings are concluded the real work of making a tariff bill begins. This is done with closed doors, and only the majority of the committee participate. When the Republicans are in power the chairman and his party friends retire to some private room to do their work in secret. Meanwhile the Democrats stand by and complain of this "dark lantern" method. When the Democrats are in power they get off in some place by themselves, and then the Republicans raise the cry of dark lantern methods. Such, it will be observed, is politics in America.

It is a serious job which these men undertake when they sit down in private. A tariff bill is a formidable document. Tradition has it that the average tariff bill contains 4,000 items. A recent presi-

M'KINLEY, BURROWS AND LAFOLLETTE.

dent of the United States used that number in his message to congress to illustrate the importance of the measure. But the number gives no adequate idea of the scope of a tariff bill. It is a thing which cannot be expressed in numbers. Leaving out the few hundred items mentioned in the full list, everything else known to the people, everything which they wear, drink, smoke or use in their homes, on their persons, in their stores, offices, factories and fields, bears a rate of duty.

And here sit the eight potentates of commerce, of trade, of manufactures, twisting the industries of the country about their fingers by the simple putting on of fractions and per cents, or by the taking away of the same. Prosperity or adversity to hundreds of important industries follows each letter which the clerk puts down on paper at the direction of these eight men. Is it any wonder the ways and means is considered the greatest of committees? Is it any wonder that it usually absorbs the best brain and largest experience of congress?

When the majority have finished their bill they report it to the full committee. The minority then for the first time may see it. No matter whether they like it or not—it is the bill, and thus goes to the house, and, accidents barred, to the statute books.

Now the minority begins to frame a bill of its own. It, too, needs a committee room. For half a century the ways and means has had but one apartment. Now it has two. A few days ago Speaker Reed took possession of the ladies' reception room, closed up an entrance to the Capitol and made of it a ways and means meeting place. It is a picturesque apartment, all marble in walls and ceiling, a huge portiere at one end and

CARLISLE, MILLS AND BRECKINRIDGE.

with two rows of columns, each bearing the Thomas Jefferson American capital of maize and tobacco.

Here meet these representatives of Democracy—men whose names are known from one end of the country to the other—Mills, Carlisle, Breckinridge, McMillin, Flower.

In the outer room Chairman McKinley, the Little Napoleon of Protection, is surrounded by Dingley, Gear, Lafollette, Bayne, Payne, McKenna and Burrows—an array of brain and loyalty of which the Republican party is proud.

WALTER WELLMAN.

An important invention by a woman is the dishwashing machine, patented by Mrs. W. A. Cockran, of Indiana. It will thoroughly wash and dry twenty dozen dishes in two minutes, and is in great demand for hotels and boarding houses. Mrs. Cockran is realizing a handsome fortune from her invention.

She B-Bit the B-Bureau.

A certain young married lady of this city is fortunate in having a good, kind husband, whose devotion to her has never flagged for an instant since the first day he fell in love with her several years ago. She, unfortunately for her own happiness as well as his, was born with a temper like gunpowder. The following little family dialogue took place between them the other morning just after breakfast, during one of her lucid intervals. It leaked out, no matter how:

"Tell me," said he, "just for my own curiosity, how it happened that I never discovered this unhappy weakness in you in our courtship days, when I thought you a paragon of perfection! How did you ever manage to restrain yourself then?"

The poor woman hesitated a few moments before answering, and then, sobbing bitterly, dropped her graceful little head upon his sturdy shoulder and said: "I used to excuse myself from you for a few minutes and g-g-go up stairs and b-b-bite pieces out of the top of the bub-bu-reau."

And he was as well satisfied with this explanation as he could have been with any-

THE FASHIONS OF THE DAY

OLIVE HARPER COMPARES THEM WITH THE WAYS OF THE PAST.

The Girls of These Happy Times Dress More Sensibly Than Their Foremothers Did, Their Chests Are Broader and They Are Much Healthier.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, April 10.—How true it is that dress makes the woman one may judge by a look at the two pretty figures below labeled with our own trade mark of "morning and afternoon." In the morning the pretty angel of the household comes down to her breakfast in a gown of soft, cream colored flannel, embroidered in Russian stitch and made in Russian style. With her abundant locks hanging in two long braids she looks the sweet, cajoling daughter who can hang around her father and give him his coffee and coax the last penny out of his pocket, so that when afternoon comes on

MORNING AND AFTERNOON.

she can put on her new Tartan plaid gown, with her stylish, if rather startling, jacket, with its bold design of braiding and velvet sleeves, and hat with a whole poultry yard on it, and go out shopping, or to take one of those long, brisk walks that are so fashionable now.

In the morning the dress compels the naive innocence of the ingenue, in the afternoon the entire outfit creates a new outward girl, and the new one as she walks along with her head well up and an almost defiant air seems to somehow exhale the statement that "the plague of the fly resteth not on the daughter of my father."

Athletic exercises may be in some measure blamed, or thanked, for the increased independence in the step and movements of the young women of the day, and the rest is due to the fuller self knowledge afforded by the education given the girls. Dresses are not made tight enough to make suffocating martyrs of them, and shoes are no longer the instruments of torture they used to be. I have a fashion book for 1848, and in it I read that slippers with thin, flexible soles were all the style, for street as well as home wear.

Now the soles of the most fashionable walking boots are at least a quarter of an inch thick, and some are thicker. The gain in the health rate is great in consequence. At that period it was proper for young girls to be delicate, ethereal, with drooping heads, long curls and slim waists, and as long as that was the fashion it was perfectly proper. Now, we have fresh, bright girls with sparkling eyes, elastic step, arms with real muscles and chests which give plenty space for deep breathing, and the result is certainly achieved by lenient fashion. Let us be thankful and hold on to what we have, and strive for further advance. It is because women are learning to think, and are learning more about themselves, a study that was deemed improper only a few years ago, that we can hope to have fashion join common sense, and give us clothing adapted to the preservation of health as well as the adornment and enhancement of beauty.

The new craze for black China crepe gowns is spreading with wonderful rapidity. There is also another kind of soft silky crape, which I really do not know the name of, but it is very crinkly and exceedingly pretty. This is also largely used, and any lady who has an old black embroidered China crepe shawl feels as happy as a miner who has struck a lead. These shawls are usually em-

FOR THE HOME DRESSMAKER.

broidered richly in colors or in black. If in colors, it is perhaps better to have it dyed black before making up, as the colors are crude and scarcely suitable for present styles. The shawl can then be used as the other crape would be in combination with some lighter color, and a magnificent dress would be the result.

I saw a gown made of plain black China crepe, made up over sky blue satin, and with a trimming of fine cut steel beads. It was worn at a recent Patti night at the opera, and was much admired; and as it is one of those styles which clever little home dressmakers can evolve from grandma's old shawl and a trifle of satin, I give the dress below. How pretty it is I leave the ladies to judge. It could be made high in the neck by a yoke, and the sleeves could be made long, leaving the puffed tops for caps. Instead of the steel beading the deft fingers of the industrious little dressmaker can embroider or applique anything she likes. Metallic colors are more suitable than any others, as they seem fitter to be used on black, and this crepe is blacker than any other fabric but velvet.

I notice among the new silks the lovely Japanese crepe, which came out last season in only light and delicate tints, is now shown in jet black with tiny pink polka dots or small flowers in the most natural colors stamped upon it. It is an exquisite material, and has the clinging effect so sought after now.

A very pretty dress for a young lady is made of beige-colored cashmere and seal brown cashmere. The lighter color is used for the panel opening and draping of the waist, and the darker for all the rest. The cuffs and waist band were worked in silk of two shades of brown, the whole gown being very dainty and girlish.

When a lady has a little nice material, either in velvet, velutina, silk or woolen goods, she can utilize it by making a plain underskirt, and then she can wear several different draperies with it, made of material of which she did not have enough to make a whole skirt. If the colors harmonize, it is enough. Any kind of basque or bodice is suitable. I know one lady who has made the prettiest and dressiest of Figaro jackets out of the best parts of a pair of fine broadcloth pantaloons. She braided it with scarlet and gold, and when she slips this on over a plain gown, the effect is almost magical. It does not take very long to braid such a jacket, and I don't believe her braid cost a dollar.

OLIVE HARPER.

LITTLE MINNIE PALMER.

Mrs. Mel R. Colquitt Writes of Her Knowledge of This Artiste.

[Special Correspondence.]

CHATTANOOGA, April 10.—I lived for two or three years in the same hotel with Minnie Palmer and was intimately acquainted with the winsome little woman. When I first met her she was playing Dorothy, in "Daniel Druce," with Lawrence Barrett, and a sweeter personation was never seen than rosebud Minnie in the staid and somber Quaker character and dress. It was my complete satisfaction with her performance that led me to approach her charming mother and express my admiration of Minnie. Mrs. Palmer, a fascinating and cordial woman, met my advance in such gracious way that it led to a long and pleasing association.

I soon met Minnie, and continued to see her frequently. She was quite young then—an apparition of girlish loveliness—rose bloom and grace and dimples. Nothing could exceed the modesty of her conduct in the hotel. She was always attended by her bewitching mother (now Mrs. Kate Palmer Stern, so well known in the movements for the help of working women), and was as free of vanity and as simple as any ordinary schoolgirl of seventeen. She usually dressed in dark colors; short skirts up to the tops of her shoes; her lovely nut brown hair falling down her back in a thick braid. She was always bright, amiable, friendly. She was blest with high spirits, but never crossed the boundary line of refinement and good breeding.

She was a hard student, and gave many hours to the study of music and dancing, giving careful attention to every branch of her art. She learned her parts rapidly, and was rarely idle, doing plain sewing or fancy work when nothing more urgent engaged her time. While I knew Minnie Palmer she filled various roles—Dorothy, a leading part in "Engaged," supporting Agnes Booth; the principal part in "Baba," in Baltimore, Philadelphia and elsewhere, and afterwards the charming creation in "My Sweetheart," which has added so much to her popularity. She enjoyed her stage triumphs and successes, and loved her profession, but was exceedingly indifferent to the personal admiration and attentions of men. They annoyed her no little by their impertinent and persistent efforts to meet her, and she not only snubbed them right and left, but whenever possible brought them to open ridicule.

I remember her telling me with great glee of how she once silenced a young aspirant. She was acting in some opera bouffe with Fortescue. One young man in the audience tried night after night, by notes, gifts and every known means, to gain her favor and acquaintance. Finally he sent, in a note, three violets, begging her to wear them on her left breast if she would meet him after the performance. Fortescue, as was usual in these burlesques, took the part of a woman, and to him Minnie gave the violets. He pinned them on his ample bosom, and when he appeared in front found occasion to say: "I will meet you; oh! I will meet you." It is useless to state that there was one crestfallen young swain in the audience that evening, and that, as his friends soon learned of it and nicknamed him "the three violets," it was sometime before he tried his fascinations upon another actress.

The last time I saw Minnie Palmer, in public and in private, was during her tour through the south just before she went to Australia. She was performing in "My Sweethert," supported by Graham. Since then she has made her trips to England, Scotland and Ireland, where her successes, both social and artistic, have been pronounced. She has merited all her triumphs, for she is gifted, conscientious in her art and in character a sweet woman, devoid of professional jealousy, high toned and generous. I am sure, too, that amid all the enticements of the stage she has kept "herself unspotted from the world," and the heart of her husband may securely trust in her.

MEL R. COLQUITT.

Babies' Toes and Fingers.

"Clarissa Potter" advises mothers to pay more attention to the fingers and toes of crawling babies. When baby cries examine her tiny toes and fingers to make sure that no splinter of wood or iron has entered them. "As baby grows older and boots take the place of soft wool socks, care must be given that the fast growing little feet are not cramped by too small boots. Even dainty kid can goadingly pinch and chafe the dainty flesh, and if the boot is too short, barbarously double the flexible, hapless toes in under themselves, causing baby much wailing distress, which we in our ignorance try to relieve with generous doses of castor oil and catnip tea."

The Mission of Educated Women.

Generous recognition is at once given of the beauty of the possible home, and of the power and importance of the woman who creates it; but that this is woman's only field is emphatically denied. There are now open to her many channels through which she can influence the race, and the question is raised as to whether the advantage in this respect is altogether on the side of the married woman.—Mrs. M. F. Armstrong in Popular Science.

STORIES OF G. W. CHILDS.

Two Occasions on Which He Is Known to Have Been Angry.

[Special Correspondence.]

PHILADELPHIA, April 10.—Mild, genial and gentle as Mr. G. W. Childs, of The Philadelphia Ledger, is known to be, there are at least two occasions on record when he has shown something akin to anger, but it is more than probable that the recording angel has let fall a couple of tears that blotted out the record of those two lapses from his usual serenity of manner and gentleness of speech, for it is pretty certain that he felt himself fully justified, which doubtless had its weight in the judgment of that good angel.

On one occasion the writer of this was in his office and for an hour watched him as he received the motley collection of unfortunate persons who came there for aid. Mr. Childs sat in his chair, and each person came forward from the outer office to the small inner one, which only held himself and the one person.

"And what do you want?" he would say kindly and sympathetically, and then the person, man or woman, would tell his tale of sorrow or suffering, and Mr. Childs would say nothing more than to ask how much money was needed, and then, without a moment's hesitation, hand out the sum required and cut short the thanks almost brusquely and hurry the person out, to go through the same formula with another.

No unworthy person could withstand the mild and trustful kindliness in those eyes, that were full of tears more than once that day as some simple but sorrowful tale of misery was told him. He had an obituary poem put into the paper for a poor old woman's dead grandchild, and he gave a broken down printer money to start a job office, and no small sum, either, and he gave a man money to bury his wife and new born baby, and a newsboy money to buy a bootblack's kit for a little friend who did not put in his appearance. All these applicants and very many more, from the broken banker to the sick book agent, went away rejoicing.

After there had been many of these visits there entered a lank and oily, long haired man, who at once opened out on the evils of giving money to beggars and persons who might go right off and spend it in riotous living, if not in wine bibbing, and wound up by asking Mr. Childs to give a thousand dollars to help a missionary church society. Mr. Childs rose up in his place, and his usually rosy color gave place to one still rosier, while his eyes fairly snapped fire as he said: "Not a cent, sir, not a cent; get out!"

The other time was when the political kettle was just beginning to simmer, before the nomination of Hayes, and there was a party very anxious to obtain Mr. Childs' consent to a nomination for president, and among all those brave men there was not one who dare broach the subject to him. So they found a woman who knew Mr. Childs, and who did not know his deep rooted aversion to office holding, and who thought that the word she brought was going to bring him pleasure, and she was proud to be the bearer of so important a message.

The good man listened as the lady unfolded her tale, but she grew frightened as she proceeded, observing that instead of receiving the news with pride and a feeling that it was but a just and deserved expression of the sentiments of his good friends, clouds gathered over his usually benign features, and she grew confused and frightened at her temerity, but persevered until her errand was done.

"You tell those—those—cowards, who put an ignorant woman to do what they dare not come and say themselves, that I'll see them —— I mean—ahem, well for reasons of my own I decline—irrevocably and entirely. And now, my dear madam, you needn't be so frightened, for you've done no wrong, only you've been made a catspaw of. Let me advise you to keep out of politics forever, as I shall. Good day."

HELEN ASHTON.

The Chinese in San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO, April 5.—No one would suppose to look at the Chinamen here gabbling, gossiping, talking, laughing, and always apparently in a good humored frame of mind, that they were so bitterly hated by a large proportion of our race. They do not seem to take it to heart at all. They keep on busying themselves with their own affairs, laying new plans for business, importing more of their own wares, setting up new stores, while even now the city authorities are seriously agitating the question of the removal of the entire Chinese quarter, with its hundreds, if not thousands, of stores, and population by tens of thousands, several miles away to South San Francisco.

Certainly they are the queerest problem we ever confronted. Among us and not of us, here in our midst now over a generation, and no more assimilation than between oil and water, stigmatized as "heathen," "pagans" and a "lower race," yet quiet, orderly, industrious, skillful, persevering and generally successful in anything they undertake, taking immediate hold of American inventions, such as the sewing machine, and using it to profit and advantage; keen in business, their leading men carrying on large commercial transactions—and here they are seemingly determined to stay. Theirs seems a quiet, undemonstrative kind of determination, but it's very determined for all that.

Disliked, abused, insulted, persecuted, with load after load shoved on them; their privileges constantly curtailed, their residence here rendered yearly more precarious and uncertain, yet they seem to go on and go ahead with that sort of progressiveness which seems to ignore entirely failure and difficulty of any sort. They seem to have a happy faculty of forgetting the unpleasant of the past. They jog on and trot in after the last blow, the last mountain put in their pathway, as if it was all right and nothing more than they expected. They seem like the coral insects, which build for mere sake or love of building, and if the whole reef is destroyed set to work on the ruins immediately, without the least feeling of discouragement.

PRENTICE MULFORD.

Business in Russia.

A well known merchant of Kieff thought it merely a clever stroke of policy to bribe all the telegraph messengers to bring him every telegram addressed to the business men in whose speculations he was interested. He paid one ruble per telegram, and having read, copied and resealed them, he sent them to the consignees and used the information thus acquired for his own ends. He profited by this trustworthy source of information for two years, and would probably have continued to profit by it till his death had the conspiracy not been discovered—by the merest accident.—[illegible] Review.